

VZCZCXRO6014  
OO RUEHSL  
DE RUEHTC #0559 2581526  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 151526Z SEP 09  
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3265  
INFO RUEHXP/ALL NATO POST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0677  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2238  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 000559

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2019  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [NL](#)  
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/NATO: VIEW ON U.S. FORCE REDUCTIONS IN  
EUROPE

REF: A. USNATO 329  
[1](#)B. BERLIN 935  
[1](#)C. WARSAW 876  
[1](#)D. THE HAGUE 514

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael F. Gallagher for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: U.S. Embassy The Hague strongly endorses USNATO's concerns about proposed U.S. force reductions in Europe (ref A). At a time when we are asking the Dutch to remain committed to NATO operations, additional reductions in U.S. NATO forces will undercut our appeal. Additionally, senior Dutch officials believe that unilateral reductions in forces misses a political opportunity in negotiations with Russia. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) On a bilateral level, the Dutch would view additional U.S. force reductions as a mixed signal when the United States simultaneously urges the Netherlands to extend commitments to NATO operations, especially in Afghanistan. We have engaged the GONL in a string of high-level meetings throughout the last two months -- including General McChrystal, Ambassador Daalder, Secretary Clinton, and even the President -- in efforts to convince the Dutch to retain a significant military presence in Afghanistan after 2010. We are also beginning public outreach efforts to support a possible Cabinet end-of-year decision to extend the Dutch engagement in Afghanistan as part of NATO/ISAF. The Dutch public would most certainly view the reductions as a loss of political will in support of NATO, and possibly one more step towards the U.S. acting unilaterally on the world stage. Dutch officials may also find the move confusing and irresponsible when the strategic review of NATO is just beginning.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) On a broader level, Embassy The Hague believes Dutch officials feel very strongly that unilateral reductions are "wasted opportunities" that could be better used for leverage or bargaining chips, especially in the context of Russian belligerence towards the eastern members in NATO, Medvedev's call for a new European security structure, and Russia's stance on the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty. For example, in previous meetings with Embassy officials, the Director for Security Policy, Henk Swarttouw, expressed Dutch disappointment at U.S. unilateral moves, such as U.S. thoughts on reducing conventional forces in Europe without reciprocal cuts by the Russians.

LEVIN